We Claim:

1.   A method for providing industry-related research, community, design, and purchasing services over a computer network comprising the steps of:

receiving, from a client computer associated with a user, a request to view a home page associated with a service provider;

displaying the home page to the client computer, wherein the home page includes thereon at least the following options: a research option, an interact option, a design option, and a buy option;

receiving a request, from the client computer, to select a selected one of the research, interact, design, and buy options; and

displaying, to the client computer, content associated with the selected one of the research, interact, design, and buy options.

2.   The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

receiving a request from the client computer to select the research option;

displaying, to the client computer, a plurality of research-related options including at least: a technical answer center option; a technical facts option; a processing and design guides option; a glossary option; and a datasheets option;

receiving a request, from the client computer, to select a selected one of the research-related options; and

displaying, to the client computer, content associated with the selected one of the research-related options.

3.   The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

receiving a request from the client computer to select the interact option;

displaying, to the client computer, a plurality of interaction-related options including at least: a career center option; a discussion groups option; an industry directory option; and a customizable home page option;

receiving a request, from the client computer, to select a selected one of the interaction-related options; and

displaying, to the client computer, content associated with the selected one of the interaction-related options.

4.   The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

receiving a request from the client computer to select the design option;

displaying, to the client computer, a plurality of design-related options including at least: a concept option; a design option; a production option; a secondary operations option; a toolbox option; a develop option; and a material selection option.

receiving a request, from the client computer, to select a selected one of the design-related options; and

displaying, to the client computer, content associated with the selected one of the design-related options.

5.   The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

receiving a request from the client computer to select the buy option;

displaying, to the client computer, a plurality of purchasing-related options including at least: a general order center option; an order now option; an order status option; a shipment tracking option; an order wizard option; a pricing and availability option; a buying history option; an issue submission option; an invoice reprint option; a material certifications option; a material safety data sheets option; and an auction option;

receiving a request, from the client computer, to select a selected one of the purchasing-related options; and

displaying, to the client computer, content associated with the selected one of the purchasing-related options.

6.   A server in communication with a computer network including a plurality of user computer terminals, the server including a memory storing machine readable computer code comprising:

- 17 -

one or more instructions for receiving, from at least one of the user computer terminals, a request to view a home page associated with a service provider;

one or more instructions for displaying the home page to the at least one user computer terminal, wherein the home page includes thereon at least the following options: a research option, an interact option, a design option, and a buy option;

one or more instructions for receiving a request, from the at least one user computer terminal, to select a selected one of the research, interact, design, and buy options; and

one or more instructions for displaying, to the at least one user computer terminal, content associated with the selected one of the research, interact, design, and buy options.

7.   The server of claim 6, wherein the machine readable computer code further comprises:

one or more instructions for receiving a request from the client computer to select the research option;

one or more instructions for displaying, to the client computer, a plurality of research-related options including at least: a technical answer center option; a technical facts option; a processing and design guides option; a glossary option; and a datasheets option;

one or more instructions for receiving a request, from the client computer, to select a selected one of the research-related options; and

one or more instructions for displaying, to the client computer, content associated with the selected one of the research-related options.

8.   The server of claim 6, wherein the machine readable computer code further comprises:

one or more instructions for receiving a request from the client computer to select the interact option;

one or more instructions for displaying, to the client computer, a plurality of interaction-related options including at least: a career center option; a discussion groups option; an industry directory option; and a customizable home page option;

one or more instructions for receiving a request, from the client computer, to select a selected one of the interaction-related options; and

one or more instructions for displaying, to the client computer, content associated with the selected one of the interaction-related options.

9. The server of claim 6, wherein the machine readable computer code further comprises:

one or more instructions for receiving a request from the client computer to select the design option;

one or more instructions for displaying, to the client computer, a plurality of design-related options including at least: a concept option; a design option; a production option; a secondary operations option; a toolbox option; a develop option; and a material selection option.

receiving a request, from the client computer, to select a selected one of the design-related options; and

displaying, to the client computer, content associated with the selected one of the design-related options.

10. The server of claim 6, wherein the machine readable computer code further comprises:

one or more instructions for receiving a request from the client computer to select the buy option;

one or more instructions for displaying, to the client computer, a plurality of purchasing-related options including at least: a general order center option; an order now option; an order status option; a shipment tracking option; an order wizard option; a pricing and availability option; a buying history option; an issue submission

option; an invoice reprint option; a material certifications option; a material safety data sheets option; and an auction option;

one or more instructions for receiving a request, from the client computer, to select a selected one of the purchasing-related options; and

one or more instructions for displaying, to the client computer, content associated with the selected one of the purchasing-related options.

11. A system for enabling industry-related research, community, design, and purchasing services over a computer network comprising:

a server associated with a service provider, said server hosting at least one web page;

a client computer associated with a user; said client computer being connected to the server through the computer network for access to the at least one web page;

said server including means for receiving, from the client computer, a request to view a home page;

said server including means for displaying the home page to the client computer, wherein the home page includes thereon at least the following options: a research option, an interact option, a design option, and a buy option;

said server including means for receiving a request, from the client computer, to select a selected one of the research, interact, design, and buy options; and

said server including means for displaying, to the client computer, content associated with the selected one of the research, interact, design, and buy options.

12. The system of claim 11, wherein said server further comprises:

means for receiving a request from the client computer to select the research option;

means for displaying, to the client computer, a plurality of research-related options including at least: a technical answer center option; a technical facts option; a processing and design guides option; a glossary option; and a datasheets option;

means for receiving a request, from the client computer, to select a selected one of the research-related options; and

means for displaying, to the client computer, content associated with the selected one of the research-related options.

13.   The system of claim 11, wherein said server further comprises:

means for receiving a request from the client computer to select the interact option;

means for displaying, to the client computer, a plurality of interaction-related options including at least: a career center option; a discussion groups option; an industry directory option; and a customizable home page option;

means for receiving a request, from the client computer, to select a selected one of the interaction-related options; and

means for displaying, to the client computer, content associated with the selected one of the interaction-related options.

14.   The system of claim 11, wherein said server further comprises:

means for receiving a request from the client computer to select the design option;

means for displaying, to the client computer, a plurality of design-related options including at least: a concept option; a design option; a production option; a secondary operations option; a toolbox option; a develop option; and a material selection option.

means for receiving a request, from the client computer, to select a selected one of the design-related options; and

means for displaying, to the client computer, content associated with the selected one of the design-related options.

15.   The system of claim 1, wherein said server further comprises:

means for means for receiving a request from the client computer to select the buy option;

means for displaying, to the client computer, a plurality of purchasing-related options including at least: a general order center option; an order now option; an order status option; a shipment tracking option; an order wizard option; a pricing and availability option; a buying history option; an issue submission option; an invoice reprint option; a material certifications option; a material safety data sheets option; and an auction option;

means for receiving a request, from the client computer, to select a selected one of the purchasing-related options; and

means for displaying, to the client computer, content associated with the selected one of the purchasing-related options.

16.   A method for developing a product over a computer network comprising the steps of:

initiating product development of a product including at least one material;

navigating, across the computer network, to a service provider home page, wherein the home page includes thereon at least the following options: a research option, an interact option, a design option, and a buy option;

selecting the research option and conducting research regarding the product;

selecting the interact option and interacting with other users regarding the product;

determining whether sufficient information has been learned to advance to a design stage;

if it is determined that sufficient information has been learned to advance to the design stage, selecting the design option and using available tools and information to design the product; and

selecting a buy option and purchasing the necessary materials for fabricating the designed product.